

SUBJECT: Crashes Involving Department Vehicles	NUMBER: 1-16.01
EFFECTIVE DATE:	REVIEW DATE:
NMMLEPSC STANDARDS: None	APPROVED: Sheriff

I. POLICY

Department policy is to investigate and document all accidents involving law enforcement vehicles.

II. RULES AND PROCEDURES

A. Accidents involving department vehicles inside of county limits

1. Department vehicles involved in accidents, no matter how minor, shall be recorded on the State of New Mexico Uniform Accident Report Form.
2. Copies of all accident/incident reports involving department vehicles will be forwarded to the Sheriff through the chain of command as soon as completed. This is necessary to expedite repair of the damaged vehicles and ensure that the accident is reviewed.
3. Duties of personnel involved:
 - a) Render aid to the injured;
 - b) Secure the scene from further damage, and preserve evidence;
 - c) Request another deputy or agency for the investigation, and call an on-duty supervisor to the scene of the accident. An on-duty supervisor will respond and take photographs of the accident scene.
4. Investigating deputy duties:
 - a) Inform the supervisor of the facts surrounding the accident;
 - b) Complete the accident report form, including a sketch or diagram;
 - c) Attempt to obtain written statements from drivers, passengers, and witnesses on accidents involving injuries.
5. Duties of the on-scene supervisor:
 - a) Respond to the scene of the accident when called;
 - b) Determine if the accident involves serious personal injury, death, or substantial damage to the claimant, or county vehicle, before the scene of the accident is cleared;
 - c) Notify the Captain via chain of command;

- d) Examine damage to vehicles and physical evidence present to ensure consistency with reported circumstances;
 - e) Determine if the vehicle is safe to remain in service or should be transported to the office or shop. In all cases involving alleged mechanical defect, the county vehicle will be transported to the Valencia County yard for inspection and confirmation;
 - f) Determine, based on damage and extent of injuries whether an outside agency should conduct the accident investigation. If it is determined that an outside agency should conduct the investigation, notify the Captain via chain-of-command as soon as practical.
6. All vehicle accidents will be reviewed by the Captain and forwarded to the office of the Sheriff for review, preventability determination, and final disposition. Drivers involved in preventable accidents may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

B. Accidents involving department vehicles outside of county limits

Employees involved in an accident outside the county limits shall:

- 1. Render aid to the injured;
- 2. Secure the scene from further damage and preserve evidence;
- 3. Request the appropriate agency for the investigation;
- 4. Notify the on-duty supervisor of the accident as soon as practical.

C. Post-accident testing requirements

- 1. Any accidents involving major property damage or serious injury or death will be subject to a blood draw to determine impairment.
- 2. When department vehicles are towed from the scene of a crash due to the fact the damage resulting from the crash makes the vehicle inoperable, the deputy driving will be subject to a blood draw at the discretion of the division commander.